

Being Human: Fully Alive

Supplementing the talk by John Bazlinton

‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’

Genesis 1:26

The purpose of life is to become truly human, fully alive

Wrong directions in our attempt: the ‘curse of the -isms’

- A Materialism: cold, limited in outlook, a dead-end
- B ‘NewAge’ Spirituality: irrational, subjective
- C Platonism: devalues this world and matter; has no place for the body in any after-life.

What is the Christian answer?

- A God is Three Persons and values human personality
- B Man is made in the image of God and destined for divinization (theosis)
- C But the human race broke trust with God, with tragic consequences for us all
- D Human beings became guilty, alienated from God, from each other, from the natural world, and from themselves
- E Yet by the coming of God in human flesh, by his death and resurrection, Man is saved and the world renewed
- F By the power of the Holy Spirit that was given at Pentecost, our nature is being restored to its true nature as an image of God.



The Risen Christ restores us to full humanity, drawing Adam and Eve from sin, separation, and death
Parecclesion of the Church of the Holy Saviour in Chora, Constantinople (Istanbul) c.1340

In Christ, we see what it is to be in God's image

The Lord's Prayer is the key to understanding our problems and to finding our way back. It is universally known and accessible to all.

It presents:

Our Father in heaven
an approachable God, to be addressed as a fond parent

Hallowed be your name
a God who is to be worshipped as holy

Your kingdom come, your will be done
a King whose rule we must seek

on earth as it is in heaven
whose control we should want in our lives

Give us today our daily bread
a God who meets essential need

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sins against us
what we must contribute

And lead us not into temptation
a God who does not press us too far

But deliver us from the evil one
a God with power to protect and save.

To be fully human is to have 'the fruits of the Spirit'

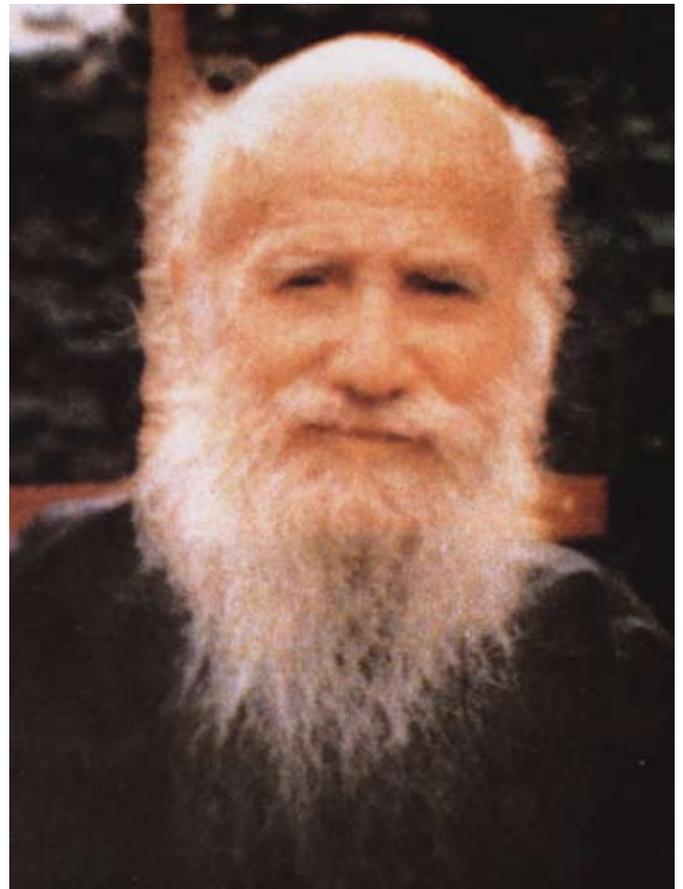
Holiness, showing the 'fruits of the spirit', is seen in:

- love, joy, peace
- patience, kindness, goodness
- faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Holiness is seen in the lives of the saints

- in the Elder Porphyrios, a challenge to limited notions of Man.

To be fully human is to be transfigured to the image of Christ.



Elder Porphyrios Bairaktaris
(1906 – 1991)

Recommended Reading

- i. Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom), *Meditations on a Theme* (London: Mowbrays, 1976)
ISBN 0-264-64571-5
- ii. Alexander Schmemmann, *Celebration of Faith*, vol.1, *I Believe* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press: Crestwood, New York, 2003)
ISBN 0-88141-111-6

'Salvation is more than forgiveness. It is a genuine renewal of man.'

St Gregory Palamas

'He who cannot forgive others, breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.'

George Herbert